

from 0.1 to 5 wt % of metal oxide solid particles,  
provided that the total amount of the silicon nitride particles, the pore-forming agent  
and the metal oxide particles is at least 90 wt %, to form a porous product.

9. (Twice Amended) A method for producing a silicon nitride filter, which  
comprises:

heat-treating in an atmosphere containing substantially only nitrogen to one that  
contains no oxygen a green body comprising:

from 45 to 85 wt % of silicon nitride particles having an average particle diameter of  
from 1 to 30 $\mu$ m,

from 10 to 50 wt % of metal oxide hollow particles and

from 0.1 to 5 wt % of metal oxide solid particles,

provided that the total amount of the silicon nitride particles, the metal oxide hollow  
particles and the metal oxide solid particles is at least 90 wt %, to form a porous product.--

Please add the following new claims.

--16. (New) The method for producing a silicon nitride filter according to Claim 1,  
wherein the organic polymer pore-forming agent is polyvinyl alcohol, an acrylic resin, a vinyl  
acetate resin or cellulose.

17. (New) The method for producing a silicon nitride filter according to Claim 1,  
wherein the content of the organic polymer pore-forming agent ranges from 15 to 40 wt %.

18. (New) The method for producing a silicon nitride filter according to Claim 9,  
wherein the metal oxide hollow particles have a porosity of at least 30 %.

19. (New) The method for producing a silicon nitride filter according to Claim 9,  
wherein the metal oxide hollow particles have a porosity of 40 to 80 %.--